**“A Servant of Jesus Christ” The Present Truth 7, 12.**

E. J. Waggoner

There are some words and expressions which, by their very frequency of occurrence, make but little impression upon us. We are so familiar with them that we read them and speak them as a matter of course, scarcely thinking that they have any meaning. One such expression is that which begins the epistle to the Romans, “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ.” Two other of Paul’s epistles, the one to the Philippians, and the one to Titus, as also Peter’s second letter and the epistles of James and Jude, begin in the same way, and in other places the apostles style themselves, or are styled, the servants of God and of Christ. The prophets, also, and Old Testament worthies, as Moses, Joshua, etc., are called servants of God. That this is more than a catch phrase, and that it is of the deepest significance, will be apparent as we study it. {PTUK June 4, 1891, p. 184.1}

The Greek word which is translated “servant” in these instances is *doulos, doulos*, and is defined by Liddell and Scott as “properly *a born bondman, or slave*.” It was the regular Greek word for a slave, and was often used of the Persians and other nations subject to a despot. The Revised Version has “bond servant” in the margin of Romans 1:1, as the equivalent of the word rendered “servant.” {PTUK June 4, 1891, p. 184.2}

We may accept the word, “slave,” therefore, as the one which the apostle uses to show the completeness of his subjection to Christ. We have, therefore, only to study the condition of a slave, to know not only how Paul regarded himself, but how all who really serve God must hold themselves. {PTUK June 4, 1891, p. 184.3}

A slave is one who is the entire property of another. He cannot dispose of his time nor his actions as he will, but only as his master directs. Neither can he hold property in his own right. His strength is his master’s; and if he earns anything, that which he receives belongs to his master. In the days of American slavery, negroes were often hired out to men who were not their masters, and often they earned large wages, but not a cent of it could they call their own. When their master bought them, they brought no property of their own, and all that they could expect for their service was enough to sustain life. Their time and strength were as absolutely their masters as were those of the horses with which they worked. {PTUK June 4, 1891, p. 184.4}

Now compare this with what we find set forth in the Scriptures as the proper condition of Christians, who are servants of Christ. Says the apostle Paul: “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20. Notice the completeness of the subjection. We are not our own, and therefore we cannot have a word to say as to what we shall do. The will of God, and his glory, is to direct us in everything. So the apostle says: “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” 1 Corinthians 10:31. {PTUK June 4, 1891, p. 184.5}

But there is another thought suggested by the word “slave,” as applied to Christians, and that is that they have been reduced to servitude from a previous condition of rebellion. Although, as the Lexicon says, the Greek word for “slave” signifies “*a born bondman*,” it is a fact that by natural birth no person is a servant of God. By nature we are all the children of wrath. Paul classes himself with us when he says: “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.” Titus 3:3. And in another place he thus contrasts the different kinds of servitude in which men may live:- {PTUK June 4, 1891, p. 184.6}

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.” Romans 6:16-18. {PTUK June 4, 1891, p. 184.7}

Before any man becomes the born bondman of Christ, he has to be born again. But this new birth implies a previous death, and that death is by crucifixion. See Galatians 2:20. Now crucifixion was a form of punishment inflicted on only the worst class of men, and its use as applied to those who thereby become Christ’s, shows a previous condition of rebellion. “The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Romans 8:7. The words of the Lord to Isaiah, concerning the people of Israel, describe the condition of all men by nature:- {PTUK June 4, 1891, p. 184.8}

“Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever; that this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord.” Isaiah 30:8, 9. {PTUK June 4, 1891, p. 184.9}

From this rebellious state we are brought into the condition of servants. As it has aptly been expressed, we capitulate, and accept the terms of peace. We become subject to God. The word “subject” or “subjection” carries with it also the relation which we should sustain to God. It comes from two Latin words meaning “under the yoke,” and is derived from the Roman custom of erecting a yoke and causing those whom they had conquered in battle to pass under it, as a token of their complete surrender. This ancient custom also explains the act of David, in putting the men of Rabbah “under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron,” and making them pass through the brick kiln. 2 Samuel 12:31. It was the same as making them pass under the yoke, as a token of their being his servants. So Christ calls us to, “Take my yoke upon you.” Taking the yoke of Christ upon us is to yield ourselves completely to him, for him henceforth to rule every act and every thought. As Paul expresses it, it is “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:5. {PTUK June 4, 1891, p. 184.10}

Right here it should be noticed that true service to Christ is willing service. We are his bond-servants, brought into captivity to Him, but it was love that bought us, so that we gladly submit. As Olshausen says of Paul: “He had been overcome by the Redeemer, conquered and subdued by His higher power. But as one not merely outwardly conquered, and still disposed to resist, but inwardly subdued, Paul had at the same time become a willing instrument for executing the purposes of the Lord as an apostle.” {PTUK June 4, 1891, p. 184.11}

Moreover, although the word rendered “servant” signifies one subject to a despot, that only indicates the completeness of the control which God has over those who are truly His servants, but does not carry with it any idea of degradation. It makes a vast amount of difference to whom one is a servant. The servant of a poor, ignorant, coarse man would be a most abject creature. The slave of such a monarch as Nebuchadnezzar might be a high officer of State. So to be a servant of the Most High God is the highest honor that any creature can have in the universe. Angels in heaven, that excel in strength, do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word, and are glad to declare themselves only fellow-servants with those who on earth are wholly devoted to Christ. Revelation 22:9. {PTUK June 4, 1891, p. 184.12}

Again, the slave of Christ is the only free man in the world. Paul says: “For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s freeman; likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.” 1 Corinthians 7:22, 23. David says: “O Lord, truly I am Thy servant; I am Thy servant, and the son of Thine handmaid; thou hast loosed my bonds.” Psalm 116:16. Here we have bondage and freedom. The man out of Christ is an abject slave; he is “holden with the cords of his sins.” But the moment he yields himself unconditionally to Christ to be His servant, the body of sin is destroyed, and henceforth, if he continues to be the Lord’s servant, sin has no more dominion over him. He is free to do right. His bondage is the bondage of love, and he finds the yoke easy. {PTUK June 4, 1891, p. 184.13}

The Lord will not accept divided service. He will not go into partnership with the devil, each having an equal share in a servant. A man must be wholly the Lord’s, or he is not the Lord’s at all. Says Christ: “No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” Matthew 6:24. If, then, we have given ourselves to the Lord as His servants, and then seek in anything to please ourselves only, we rob Him of service which is his due. Our strength, both of mind and body, belongs to the Lord, for He says:- {PTUK June 4, 1891, p. 185.1}

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.” Luke 10:27, with verse 28. {PTUK June 4, 1891, p. 185.2}

Now suppose a man indulges a habit which destroys his strength of body and vigor of mind; he is not then the Lord’s slave; he is the slave of sinful indulgence. One man eats more than is good for him, more than he needs. He does so, simply because the food tastes good. That extra quantity of food, instead of increasing his strength, is a tax upon it. Strength that he should have to devote to the Lord is perverted to the service of appetite. Now it matters not what that man’s profession may be, he is not the bond-servant of Christ. If he were, he would glorify God in eating and drinking, as well as in every other act of life. {PTUK June 4, 1891, p. 185.3}

Here is a test by which we may settle every question as to the lawfulness or unlawfulness of an act: Will it glorify God? If it will it is not only lawful but necessary. The man who is honest with himself before God in this question can settle which things are unlawful for him, and how far he may go in things that are necessary, as in eating and drinking. {PTUK June 4, 1891, p. 185.4}

“But what a hardship,” says one, “to be obliged to rein ourselves up to such a test.” Well, that depends on whether or not we are really the *slaves* of Christ; whether or not we have willingly, gladly capitulated, accepting His terms, and yielding to His service. If we have, then it is not a task to inquire what will be to His glory, and to do it. We have yielded to Him because in His infinite love and mercy He has enabled us to see that there is more to be desired in His service than in our own; and we have made His will our own. He has made us new creatures, giving us a new heart, and new purposes, so that when we do His will we are simply doing our own, for His will is ours, and our will is His. {PTUK June 4, 1891, p. 185.5}

“But suppose our will is His, and we have only one longing, supreme desire, namely, to do His will and glorify Him, how can we always do it?” That is answered in the very fact that we are His, wholly His. We are not our own, but have resigned ourselves into His hands as simple instruments of His will. We have no power in ourselves, but He has all power, and can make us what He wishes. And here comes in the encouragement of the thought that we serve a mighty Master, one against whom all the powers of earth and hell combined can do nothing. So when the fierce temptation arises, when the infirmity of the flesh would cause us to fall, we, having the mind of our Master, to hate sin, flee to Him for strength, and His strength does what our weakness cannot. {PTUK June 4, 1891, p. 185.6}

What comfort in the thought that the whole thing is comprised in simple submission to God. “Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” Romans 6:13. God wants us to live holy lives; He has shown the strength of His desire for us to be delivered from evil, by giving His Son to die for us. And since God has such an infinite longing for us to be free from sin, and has such infinite power to accomplish His desires, what can hinder the accomplishment of those desires, if we but yield ourselves to Him? No matter how fully we may have been the servants of sin, we now, having become servants to God, are made free from sin, having our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. Romans 6:22. {PTUK June 4, 1891, p. 185.7}

No wonder that Paul was able to accomplish such wonderful things. He was the Lord’s slave, wholly and without reserve, and the Lord simply worked through him. Even while the most conscious of his own weakness, he could say: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” {PTUK June 4, 1891, p. 185.8}

God is not partial; He is no respecter of persons. He is as ready to strengthen us with all might, according to His glorious power, as he was the apostle Paul. And so no matter what our inherited or acquired weakness, we may be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation; and when that salvation is revealed, we may be sealed as his servants, to see His face, and stand before His throne, serving him day and night in His temple. Glorious service! Who would not prefer that to the poor, miserable service of self? E. J. W. {PTUK June 4, 1891, p. 185.9}

**“The Gospel of God” The Present Truth 7, 13.**

E. J. Waggoner

In his introduction to the epistle to the Romans, Paul declares himself to be “a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord,” and he throws in, by way of parenthesis, the statement that this gospel of God “He had promised afore by His prophets in the holy Scriptures.” These two verses bring out two points that are too often overlooked or denied, to which we wish to call attention. {PTUK June 18, 1891, p. 200.1}

First, the gospel is “the gospel of God, concerning His Son Jesus Christ.” It is not only a mistake, but a grievous error, and a grave charge against the goodness of God, to separate Him from the gospel. To make God the Father the hard, vindictive, unyielding Judge, who is moved to compassion only by the entreaties of the Son, is as grievous a sin as is that of the Catholics in making Christ the angry Judge, and the virgin Mary the one who interposes to shield sinners from his wrath. That God the Father has the deepest interest in the salvation of sinners, and is filled with tender love and pity for them, is proved by the following most familiar words of Jesus:- {PTUK June 18, 1891, p. 200.2}

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. {PTUK June 18, 1891, p. 200.3}

Here is shown the depth of God’s love for us. It was so great that He allowed his Son to die that we might live. So fully was God concerned in the gospel plan, that the beloved disciple, without designating whether He referred to the Father or the Son, said: “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us.” 1 John 3:16. “God did not selfishly send his Son to die. The Father was bound up in the Son, for they were one. The Father permitted the Son to come to earth to die, yea, He “delivered Him up for us all,” but in so doing He gave all that heaven had to bestow. Every sorrow and suffering that our Saviour bore for us pierced to an equal extent the great heart of God. {PTUK June 18, 1891, p. 200.4}

It is true that the apostle Paul, in writing to the Thessalonians, speaks of the final destruction of them “that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Thessalonians 1:8. But this simply shows the unity of the Father and the Son in the work. The Father and the Son are one. In every act and thought they are united. “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,” yet of Christ it is said that “He gave Himself for us.” Titus 2:14. And this agrees with the words of the prophet:- {PTUK June 18, 1891, p. 200.5}

“Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord; even He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.” Zechariah 6:12, 13. {PTUK June 18, 1891, p. 200.6}

“The man whose name is The BRANCH,” is Jesus Christ. He sits upon His Father’s throne (Revelation 3:21) and both together are counseling for the peace of those who are enemies and alienated in their minds by wicked works. Still further, read those most expressive words of Paul, “To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.” 2 Corinthians 5:19. The humble birth, the life of poverty, and want, and temptation, and suffering, the agony in the garden, the reproaches and insults in the judgment-hall, and the cruel death upon the cross, were all manifestations of God’s good-will to men, and desire for peace among them. {PTUK June 18, 1891, p. 200.7}

And this gospel was preached from the very beginning. Abel believed it, and by his faith he “offered unto God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous.” Hebrews 11:4. Noah believed it, and so “became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” Verse 7. Likewise “the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” Galatians 3:8. This was when Abraham had no child, and when there was no human possibility that he ever could have one, yet “he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness.” Genesis 15:6. {PTUK June 18, 1891, p. 200.8}

So it was with the Israelites, the lineal descendants of Abraham. The apostle says, “For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them.” Hebrews 4:2. “Unto us as well as unto them!” That seems a strange way of putting the things, doesn’t it? If he were asserting that the Jews had the gospel, he would have said that the gospel was preached unto them as well as unto us. But that is not his point. He has already shown that the gospel was preached to them. They had it first, and rejected it, and now we are warned lest we, having the same privileges that they had, should “fall after the same example of unbelief.” {PTUK June 18, 1891, p. 200.9}

This gospel of the death and resurrection of Christ for the deliverance of man from sin and death was promised through the prophets in the holy Scriptures. Time would fail to enumerate the prophecies concerning the Messiah, and we can only sum them up in a few New Testament statements. Peter, speaking of the salvation of our souls, says: “Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” 1 Peter 1:10, 11. {PTUK June 18, 1891, p. 200.10}

Paul, when permitted to speak for himself before Agrippa, said: “Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come; that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.” Acts 26:22, 23. This does not mean that Christ should be the first person, in point of time, that should rise from the dead, for the prophets themselves raised the dead, and Christ raised many before his death; but it meant that he should be the first in eminence. He is the first-fruits of them that slept. Among all that shall rise from the dead He is first, because it was His resurrection that made it possible for any others to be raised from the dead. {PTUK June 18, 1891, p. 200.11}

Peter also declared to the people who were astonished at a notable miracle: “But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled.” Acts 3:16. And then he added, “Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.” Verse 24. {PTUK June 18, 1891, p. 200.12}

Not only did the prophets foretell of these days, but they enjoyed them, not simply in anticipation, but in reality. Jesus said to the Jews, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.” John 8:56. And the prophet David said of the same day,-the day of salvation: “I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.” Psalm 118:21-24. {PTUK June 18, 1891, p. 200.13}

How could they rejoice in the day of salvation, and be saved by Christ’s blood, hundreds of years before it was shed? Because God’s promise made it real before it took place. He “quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.” Romans 4:17. A thing which God has promised is just as sure as though it had actually taken place. There was not the slightest possibility that Christ should not suffer, after he had once been promised; and that Christ should redeem men by his blood “was foreordained before the foundation of the world.” 1 Peter 1:20. Then, since He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, it follows, as a matter of course, that those who lived in the first year of the world could derive the same benefit from His sacrifice that we can. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.” “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” E. J. W. {PTUK June 18, 1891, p. 200.14}